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THE CEA CRITIC

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Freshman English At Amherst College

An analogy from literary history may suggest the condition in which our students come to Amherst to "learn composition." In one way, the typical freshman is a strict neo-classicist: he believes firmly in the Rules, and asks his teacher to give him more. He wants us to give him a Style, so that he in turn can "deliver so many Things, even in so many Words"; he asks for a method whereby he will be able to produce in words exactly what he sees around him, exactly what he thinks. His teacher should, he feels, give him a fool-proof way to connect the mirror image of reality in his mind with a stock of words, which will then appear mechanically on his paper.

Yet, paradoxically, the same typical student is often a convinced Romantic. He assumes that composition emerges magically from the writer's frenzy, exists in its true form in a first draft, is invulnerable to revision or criticism. This eruption produces Truth, the student says, and therefore no one else can possibly criticize or revise what he has found in his heart. When he takes this attitude, of course, he denies the validity of any disciplined writing course.

The student's paradoxical position — teach me the Rules, yet leave me alone — has been the result of a valuable training

he has received — a training that fortunately gives him a good deal of respect for grammar and the mechanics of writing, and some sympathy for the personal importance of writing. But both the neo-classic and romantic attitudes, it seems to me, are naive for the college writer. Teachers of an adult, twentieth century course have more complex assumptions about writing than these, and there seems every reason to apply them in a freshman course.

One basic assumption made in the freshman course at Amherst is that composition is a process, not a subject, that the student improves his writing by the writing he does, not by what he is told about writing. For this reason, in our course the student has no text except his own papers (one written for every class) for a whole year and the mimeographed papers of his classmates. The papers are written in response to assignments that face the student, during any one semester, with a related series of about thirty problems requiring his every effort and art. He is asked to explore an area of his own experience about which he has presumably never written before, an area enough his own so that he can find no confusingly relevant model in the work of any other

(Please turn to p. 10)

Fourth Annual Humanities Seminar

How to foster international exchange of people and ideas was discussed at the 1959 American Humanities Seminar. Some 150 participants worked hard for three fully packed days defining issues and trying to see what could be done by the humanities to further international understanding and peace.

Off-shoot of CEA

The American Humanities Seminar, sponsored by the Humanities Center for Liberal Education (lively offspring of the CEA and industry sponsored Institutes of the past) proved its growing maturity by the seriousness with which it proceeded and by the high intellectual level of its discussions and decisions. The large number of key people from learned societies, universities, government and industry who attended gave testimony to the importance of the issues discussed and to the drawing power of the Humanities Center itself. The CEA and Maxwell H. Goldberg, executive director of the CEA and of the Humanities Center, can be proud of their parenthood.

Max Lerner, Keynoter

With forthrightness and power, Max Lerner of Brandeis University got the Seminar off to a vigorous start with his address at the opening luncheon. He decried the lack of a vital image of man in our culture — human beings are for us "some-

thing to be manipulated" and we are not spending enough energy on being and becoming. He called for a hidden revolution within ourselves if we are to survive.

Professor Lerner said that we must discover new social creativeness to surmount the triple revolutions of our time already in full swing — economic, colonial, and racial. Our politicians must establish "an open world of societies": to do this, they will need to be teachers, psychologists, dramatists. He called for the overcoming of the mass society we have created by a new renaissance of peers led by a creative, not a power, minority. The carriers of promise for this leadership, he said, can be found everywhere and anywhere.

Have We a Goal?

A panel made up of Max Lerner; Gerard J. Mangone, Syracuse University; John McCollum, the University of Chicago; Charles W. Merrifield, Joint Council on Economic Education; Frederic E. Pamp, Jr., International Management Association; John Q. Stewart, Princeton; Ernest van den Haag, New York University; and Francis A. Young, Committee on International Exchange of Persons, with George E. Probst, Thomas Alva Edison Foundation, as moderator, bore down on the issues already opened up by Professor Lerner. Professor van den Haag pointed out that in establish-

ing cultural contact with Europeans we must remember that people are judged not by what they do or are, but by what the judges themselves are: for example, anti-semitism is not caused by Jews but by antisemites. Charles W. Merrifield underlined the importance of economic and population factors in cultural interchange. The major fact of our times is the unequal distribution of the fruits of technology. He called for the help of the humanists in fusing the discrepant images of man abroad in the world today.

Robert B. Knapp, assistant director for educational programs, American Council on Education, speaking from the floor, asked that we discuss our mission in the world. Other nations know what their missions are but we have not formulated our own, he said. Max Lerner questioned whether we have any goal at present, except the creation of more and more of what we already possess. But, he added, we are not the kind of society that sets goals. Our mission is to let people determine their own goals. He called for more of the dynamic spirit of F. D. Roosevelt, who is still much admired abroad, and less of the Dulles policy of a world which stands still.

George Probst pointed out that the genius of America is to make a country as it goes, paying little heed to intellectual and academic leadership. The industrial revolution in our country has received no intellectual guidance, he said. Max Lerner agreed and added that technology has advanced so rapidly that unintelligibility has appeared within it, raising the ethical problem of control. Can the humanist allow science to take its own course? Our hypothesis seems to be, "If you can do a thing, it is all right to do it." "We must go back to humanistic values which do not come out of science," Professor Lerner maintained. He then characterized the relativism of the American progressive movement of the recent past as a "corrosive which destroyed itself" and called for a movement away from relativism.

In closing the session, which generated many more ideas than those touched upon above, George Probst described America as a state of mind, a dream of perfection.

While Rome Burns

Again this year, Dr. Frank L. Boyden and Deerfield Academy were generous hosts to the Seminar at a banquet held at the Academy. The principal address, a simple but moving statement made by Dr. Loa Swan Bie of the Indonesian State University, allowed us to view ourselves as seen by a sensitive and intelligent foreign observer. Very concretely and compassionately Dr. Loa described his amazement at the physical wealth and abundance of our life as contrasted with the relative impoverishment of the life of his own country,

(Please turn to p. 8)

THE CEA CRITIC

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lish Association, Inc.

CARRYING ON

Robert T. Fitzhugh brought the spirit of
a crusader to the CEA. With a stronger
sense of mission and less passive curiosity
in observing the peculiarities of human na-
ture for what they are than Burges John-
son, he openly championed the cause of
lively teaching with an ethical aim, mak-
ing explicit possibilities which had been
merely latent in the earlier CEA. Some
feared the tendency to develop a dogmatic
fervor in his approach; the openness of
the founders of our organization seemed
jeopardized.

But in the long run, this cantakerousness
was justified, for it kept our organization
alive during the war period when it might
otherwise have languished. The gadfly had
become something of a hornet. Constantly
we were reminded that unless the liberal
arts teacher reaches the consciences of his
students and reforms and purifies them

for life, his job is not being done. And if
he does his job aright, society should re-
ward him with more in the way of security
and salary. His is a noble role.

Impatient with what he regarded as the
intellectual excesses of the new criticism
and the new poetry, Bob Fitzhugh some-
times acted the part of the bull in the
china shop, breaking crockery the beauty
and value of which he might have recog-
nized. The idea that literature can be val-
uable in and for itself seemed alien to this
man with a mission. But his mission was
good. Surely it is true that liberal arts
must be a reforming study, even though
we cannot dogmatize about what the re-
form should be. Bob's description of a
Utopian university in one number of *The
Critic* brought inquiries from readers con-
cerning how they could get jobs there. On
a more practical level, it was he who started
the CEA appointments bureau which was
later copied by the MLA.

It was Bob Fitzhugh also who threw him-
self enthusiastically into the CEA institutes
fostered by Max Goldberg, with the in-
tention of reforming the businessmen with
whom we conversed and making them more
aware of the importance of ethical values
and liberal background. For him these meet-
ings were not so much occasions for ex-
change, as Max had intended them to be,
but were rather irresistible podiums from
which to present his message. I well re-
member at East Lansing and elsewhere the
fervent pleas Bob delivered to the liberal
arts teachers to return to the basic task of
reforming the soul, and to the business-
men to be more aware of the importance
that this be done. Meanwhile, Burges John-
son remained on the sidelines, opposed to
these meetings with the non-academic
world, contending that we could not hope to
reform it—though actually this was neither
our aim nor our intention.

Under Bob Fitzhugh CEA meetings were
often excellent and full of life—they had
plenty of spark, and brought together many
first-rate minds. From the start this had
been a key implement of CEA—gathering
groups of teachers in all parts of the
country for the cross-fertilization which
occurs when genuine issues are discussed.
Under Burges Johnson, Bob Fitzburgh, and
Max Goldberg (who enlarged these meet-
ings to include others beside teachers, and
other teachers beside teachers of English)
the CEA has always had its largest im-
pact in its meetings. Bob Fitzhugh car-
ried on and kept our organization lively
and distinctive, with a personality and en-
ergy all its own.

L. E. H.

Omission

The article "Memorandum" on page ten
of the April, 1959 *Critic* was written by
Charles Mendell, Rollins College. Our apol-
ogies to the author of that amusing piece,
directed at all conference goers, for our
failure to include his name.

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NOMINATIONS

The CEA Committee on Nominations for office in 1960 has named the following:

President: Donald J. Lloyd. Asso. Prof. of English and director of Modern Language Audio-Visual Research Project, Wayne State Univ. Poet, essayist, and co-author of "American English in Its Cultural Setting." Associate Director of The Humanities Center. Founder and honorary president of Metropolitan Linguistics Club, Detroit. Director and vice-president of CEA.

2nd Vice-President: John Ball. Prof. of English, Miami Univ. (Ohio). Co-author of three books on writing; editor, "From Beowulf to Modern Writers." Associate Director of The Humanities Center. Chief of Staff, International Co-operation Administration seminars on communication. Chairman of several committees and director of CEA.

Members of Board of Directors: Lee Holt. Prof. of English, American International College. Author of scholarly and professional essays. Editor of U. S. Navy publications and since 1952 managing editor of The CEA CRITIC. Director of New England CEA and of The Humanities Center.

Muriel J. Hughes. Prof. of English, Univ. of Vermont. Essayist and author of "Women Healers in Medieval Life and Literature." Vice-president and president of New England CEA.

Marvin Laser. Prof. of English and chairman, Division of Language Arts, Los Angeles State College. Author of essays on Poe, Hawthorne, etc. Vice-president, Chicago CEA.

Elisabeth Schneider. Prof. of English, Temple Univ. Essayist, author of two books, and editor of two. Former secretary and currently president of Pennsylvania CEA.

Nominating Committee for 1960: Henry Sams. Prof and Head of English Pennsylvania State University. Essayist and editor. President of Chicago CEA and immediate ex-president of CEA.

Patrick Hogan. Asso. Prof. of English, Mississippi State Univ. Essayist and editor. Chairman, Miss. English Assoc. Chairman, CEA Committee on Regionals.

Keith Fennimore. Prof. of English, Albion College. President, Michigan CEA.

The present 2nd Vice-President, Harry T. Moore, automatically becomes 1st Vice-President.

Respectfully submitted,
Harry R. Warfel
William W. Watt

Nominating Committee

There is a provision that extra names may be added to the ballot for Directors and Nominating Committeemen by petition signed by ten members. Such petitions should be sent to the Amherst office of the CEA within a week or so if the names are to appear on the printed ballot which will shortly be prepared.

NEW CLOTHES FOR THE FRESHMAN REFERENCE PAPER

How weary, stale and unprofitable, we sometimes feel, are the uses of the traditional Freshman reference paper. Not only do many students have formidable difficulties with the simple mechanics of notetaking, footnoting and bibliography; they, too often, seem to be unable to choose a satisfactory subject which they can follow through to an adequate conclusion. Nor do such devices as the pamphlet source appear to produce more satisfactory results.

Feeling all that, and tired with waste, I cried, and then tried this: I made preliminary assignments in Griffith T. Pugh's *Guide to Research Writing*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1955 (1948), led the students (one day class of 26, and one evening class of 12) to the library for the lecture and demonstration of systems, sources and materials. Then I assigned, in groups of three and four for the fifty minute period, an individual report on reference materials.

Successively, I assigned the CHEL, Short Story Index, Wall Street Journal, the Yale Review, Dictionary of American Biography and Industrial Arts Index. I required students to use the prescribed handbook bibliographical form in describing the book, to talk before the class, and to bring in the source and pass it around the group.

Each student, then, found, examined and described one reference source, and saw and handled a variety of other materials. But, could he use them in a problem?

To encourage practice in application to a specific problem, when all students had finished the reports on reference materials, I asked them, in groups of two and three, to prepare a second report, of about 1,000 words, on topics such as: a comparison of two prominent Americans (or Englishmen) of the nineteenth century; two effects of the recession on local industry; a comparison of three prominent short story writers of 1957; a discussion of one story of each; two factors in the battle of Thermopylae, and the pagan origins of May Day.

At this point, I required students to use note cards, to follow footnote form and to prepare a simple, but clear, bibliography. At the beginning of each class succeeding each group of "problem" reports, I carefully called attention, by demonstrating on the board, to what, specifically, each student should have done, in his approach to and execution of the problem, and in the details of notetaking and bibliographical description. Some students in succeeding reports showed some evidence of having learned from the experience of their predecessors.

But, we may ask, were students required to practice enough, in notetaking, in footnoting, in bibliographical detail? Did they

receive enough help in learning to select a topic? Was the topic (which I assigned) sufficiently difficult, scholarly and long, to be seriously considered as satisfactory for the needs of the student in his later progress? I believe that, by direct comparison with classes in several other colleges, these two groups acquired more familiarity, more direct experience, and learned to work more honestly and seriously, than they could have in the usual, frequently apathetic and ineffective, half-hearted traditional routine. What say you?

Fulton Catlin,
Geneva College

Boners

Norman Foerster suggests that The Critic run a monthly department of boners, and suggests that readers would send in more than enough. He submits the first, which came to him from the College of William and Mary.

"Tintern Abbey": "... when like a roe I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides Of the deep rivers ..."

A sophomore paper interprets this passage: "He was like a young buck bounding through the forest looking for a doe."

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AN INQUIRY CONCERNING OLD ENGLISH

In the sometimes narrow business of earning a Ph. D., or in the wider and more important business of becoming humanized, do the traditional courses in Old English justify themselves? Most doctoral candidates are required to spend roughly ten per cent of their time in these courses. Are the present courses in Old English doing their job effectively and efficiently? That is, do graduate students in general emerge from six hours of Old English with an understanding of that foreign language comparable to the understanding resulting from a similar exposure to any other foreign language? Old English offers the same practical problems of vocabulary and grammar that foreign languages in general offer. I do not mean to suggest that an awareness of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Anglo-Saxons is not worth having—whether or not one teaches English. I suspect, however, that we pay rather dearly for what we get.

My own feeling is that the philological approach to Old English is an atavism of the days when the Ph. D. stood for "delver in philology"; if so, in this case an out-moded tradition has been unwisely preserved by academic inertia. On the other hand, the "literary" approach is unrealistic. It is highly unlikely that most graduate students will acquire a literary knowledge of Old English in a few weeks or a semester. And without a literary knowledge of a language, it seems silly to attempt to read masterpieces in it. In my own view it is wiser to read a good translation carefully than it is to muddle through the original. Either we should learn Old English thoroughly, or we should spend our time to

better advantage doing something else.

As a substitute for the courses we now have I should think a two-semester course which would involve an intensive study of the history of the language in one semester, and an extensive study of linguistics—with special attention to important recent developments—in another, would be more useful and, if not sweet, at least meaty. *Beowulf* could then be removed from the position of special privilege it now holds in many graduate schools, and be made to compete fairly with other recognized masterpieces. I offer this comment parenthetically because the main purpose of this article is inquiry, not proposal.

Prudence prompts me to say that these remarks are not meant as a commentary on my own experience. It is supposed, though, that they do apply in a general way to English language study in the graduate schools of this country.

Every discipline needs to clean house once in a while; and I think it time this skeleton be taken out of its academic closet where it may be looked at with critical but unjaundiced eyes. I do not wish to be mistaken for a corrupter of youth. This article is not a modest proposal to abolish the teaching of Old English. Rather, I hope to elicit some response from teachers and students who have a special interest in an area of concern to all of us.

Ronald Gottesman
Indiana University

WALL PLAQUES FOR THE CLASSICS

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Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress:"
DO IT NOW

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*: THINK

Robert Browning, "Porphyria's Lover":
IF IT'S WORTH DOING AT ALL, IT'S
WORTH DOING WELL

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*: BE SURE
YOU'RE RIGHT—THEN GO AHEAD

Theodore Dreiser, *An American Tragedy*:
BE PREPARED

Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: SAFETY PAYS

Washington Irving, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow": GET AHEAD

Leigh Hunt, "Jenny Kissed Me:" DON'T
JUST SIT THERE: DO SOMETHING!

Tom Burnam
Colorado State College

TWENTY-FIRST
ANNUAL MEETING

The Palmer House, Chicago, Monday,
Dec. 28. 4:15 p.m., Registration, Grand
Ballroom Foyer. 4:30 p.m., General Session,
"Scholarship and Poetry." Speaker: John
Ciardi "How Does a Poem Mean Man?"
6:45 p.m., Quadrangle Club, 1155 East
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'SOME IN CHATHAM, ENGLAND,' OR, A GRAMMAR FOR THE HUMANITIES

Much of my argument consists of an attempt to draw the shortest possible line between two mistakes. Recently a West Coast disk jockey was asked by his fans to play the following three records: 'Pete's Floor,' 'Smokettes in Your Eyes,' and, most enchanting of all, 'Some in Chatham, England,' from the musical *South Pacific*. ('Petite Fleur,' 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,' and 'Some Enchanted Evening.') That is the first class of mistakes.

The second mistake takes a little more explanation since it was first described some 2300 years ago. I refer to a passage from Plato's dialogue on rhetoric, the *Phaedrus*. We are to imagine an audience persuaded by an able orator that the word horse refers to the tame beast of burden which has the longest ears. Our orator then makes a speech in honor of this pseudo-horse (actually an ass) and the rhetorician describes the usefulness of this "horse" in war and as a baggage-carrier.

Socrates then asks: "And when the orator instead of putting an ass in the place of a horse, puts good for evil, being himself as ignorant of their true nature as the city on which he imposes is ignorant; and having studied the notions of the multitude, falsely persuades them not about 'the shadow of an ass,' which he confounds with evil, — what will be the harvest which rhetoric will be likely to gather after the sowing of that seed?"

Today we might answer either "television advertising" or "the art of brinkmanship," but 2300 years ago *Phaedrus* merely replied, "The reverse of good."

To make the connection, to find the shortest and best line between these two mistakes, is, I believe, to find a way from the drudgery, to the dignity of our profession.

I have styled the way between these two points *A Grammar for the Humanities*.

My *Grammar for the Humanities* has five topics — I am using "topic" in the logical sense of "starting point" or "field of consideration."

Topic 1. *Mechanics* — the fixed signals of the language and their substitution frames.

Topic 2. *Style* — the free signals of the language, among which choice, both aesthetic and personal, is permitted.

Topic 3. *Organization* — the arrangement of these fixed and free signals into a larger whole or "shapeliness."

Topic 4. *Reasoning* — the logic behind these signals and their arrangement.

Topic 5. *Content* — the facts, illustrations, and value judgments which make up the donnee, the given material, of rhetoric; namely, the humanities.

Some readers may remember that these five topics were used to obtain a remarkable degree of uniformity of grading during the brief existence of the late lamented General Composition Test of the Education-

al Testing Service. Here I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Earle Eley, who first made me acquainted with the use of these topics in ranking student essays.

I will not defend here the efficiency (tested by me for some five years now) which quickly comes about when these topics are used as part of a student composition course, especially when the student is given a grade for each of these five fields of consideration, either with, or in place of a general grade.

Nor will I speak at length on the reforms and changes I have adopted in teaching three of these topics, those of style, organization, and logic. But I trust enough has been said to indicate two things. The first is that I think we must stop throwing the technique of our subject at the student with the same random joy that might result if we tore out pages of the dictionary and made students learn them. We must classify our discipline into workable units of learning. It is educational nonsense, either in our handbooks or in our teaching, to follow a unit on analysis (a branch of the topic of logic) with a unit on sentence structure (fixed forms), and that unit with a unit on word choice (free forms, or style).

The second thing I wish to stress is that instead of letting the topic of mechanics take one half or more of my space, (as is the very general practice), I have deflated it to one fifth of my scheme.

Let us return to our original two mistakes to see why. And let us see if we can connect our first and last topics, those of mechanics and content, in our *Grammar for the Humanities*.

The error 'Some in Chatham, England' has an engaging quality. Some readers, perhaps, will dismiss such errors, no doubt with the kind of analysis set forth by Sigmund Freud in his *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. There he observed that "A woman who is very anxious to have children always reads storks instead of stocks." And he concluded in words I have sympathized with when the weekly themes pile up, "back of every error is a repression."

I note in passing that one of the largest and most reputable of eastern universities has turned all its disciplinary problems over to its psychiatric department. Perhaps we should replace our underpaid and under-respected composition teachers with overpaid and far more glamorous "headshrinkers."

Let us console ourselves with the folk wisdom which has made the root word-psycho come to stand for lunatic and turn to a more public analysis of the error 'Some in Chatham, England.'

The most interesting feature of the mistake is that although it is an error for 'Some Enchanted Evening,' the phrase

'Some in Chatham, England' is not by itself incorrect English. True, a prepositional phrase has displaced an adjectival phrase. But the new song title is in as good English as its real original.

Let us think of language, in Leonard Bloomfield's sense, as a substitution frame, one consisting of formulae, such as "X hit Y" (subject verb complement) in which, within the liberal genius of the language, we can substitute appropriate elements, or "signals." Then we can see what has happened. "Some" is a signal which points two ways. It may limit a noun in number, or it can serve as a substitute noun, as a kind of pronoun. Our record fan put "some" into the second substitution frame, and filled out the rest of his formula accordingly. In other words, one correct signal has been substituted for another correct signal, the result being not so much error, as chaos. In fact, I suggest that it is far more accurate to describe mechanical mistakes in English as signal substitution mistakes. A little reflection, will, I hope, suggest the startling notion that practically all mistakes in mechanics are of this general kind, in which an inappropriate signal has been substituted for an appropriate signal.

We are all familiar, I suppose, with the fuzzy idiom, or portmanteau idiom, in which the writer begins with one idiom (or signal) but ends, alas, with another. And we all know the kind of signaling error which has given rise to continuing controversy over "correctness" and "usage." That type occurs when a vulgate form (substitution frame or signal) is used in the wrong dialect group, for example, when a student says of his girl at a professorial tea party, "She don't take lemon." That kind of signal may indicate the need for removal to a more interesting kind of party, but it is

(Please turn to p. 6)

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(Continued from p. 5)

socially, not linguistically incorrect. We need begin to worry only when the student says, "Lemon don't take her."

Perhaps I have said enough about 'Some in Chatham, England' to indicate my growing conviction, in accordance with the work of Bloomfield and Charles W. Morris (as expressed in *Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, Chicago, 1938), that all language consists of signals arranged in substitution frames. So-called mistakes in language do not exist in the usual sense in which these are described by English teachers, for the simple reason that a child normally learns all the substitution frames of his dialect by the time he is six years old. A boy or girl may substitute the wrong signals within those frames, but after six he never mistakes the substitution frames of his dialect.

We may ask a child or student to disentangle confused or jumbled signals, and we may, often unwisely, force him to learn what we regard as a more appropriate dialect, but as we progress through the fascinating topic I have called mechanics, it does not help to term such teaching the "correction of mistakes."

I expect that most of us think of the mechanical side of our profession as its drudgery. And perhaps a large number of us find our real usefulness in teaching the matters of style, organization, and logic, which I have deliberately omitted, not as unimportant but as less important than the question of content, with which I wish to conclude. It is our choice of content which gives, or fails to give, our subject its dignity. We all know that composition teachers, in academic life generally, are never regarded with the respect accorded almost automatically to that biologist, in all other human aspects a village atheist, who discovers a new way to slice up a frog. We deserve our disapproval because we have not insisted manfully, no matter what the odds, that composition can never be taught as a technique, or in a vacuum. It must always be about something. And its something is first of all the humanities.

I read with horror James B. Conant's remark, in *The American High School Today* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959), "Each student should be required to write an average of one theme a week. Themes should be corrected by the teacher." This well-meaning advice is about as useful as asking all students to do deep knee bends for a year. I still remember my dismay, when I was a member of the General Composition Test Committee, on discovering that we could ask questions only in "social studies" and not in literature or in the humanities, because high school students, old enough to have adult jobs in Europe or Asia, could not be trusted to write on questions in the humanities.

When we return to our passage from the Phaedrus we see that it is about the kind of writer who is just the sort produced by our schools and colleges, the writer who knows techniques of composition, but ig-

norantly misleads his ignorant audience about the difference between good and evil. Even more fascinating is the nature of his mistake, for he has substituted the signal "evil" for the signal "good." His mistake then, in a larger sense, is an error in signal substitution.

Now the dignity of our profession, I suggest, lies in its content. If that content is the humanities, we can go from its fixed forms, from its mechanics, from its signals and substitution frames, through its techniques of style, organization, and logic, to that content, to the facts and value judgments of human existence, which are the real goal of all rhetoric. There our task is one of asking the student, not of telling him, to examine this section of his mind. Again and again. I have found, what are on the surface mistakes in style, in organization, in logic, are under the surface, mistakes in fact and value judgment. A student who uses a pompous style may do so to cover up a vacuum of values. A student who does not organize his materials may fail to do so because he is contemptuous of his fellow man — others are supposed to work to understand him. A student whose logic is inconsistent may be concealing from himself two radically different structures of value judgments which he is trying to hold simultaneously, one selfish, one altruistic. There is only one way to cure these diseases of rhetoric, and that is to expose the soul which has originated them to the greatest works in the humanities which we can find. Working on the principle of our substitution frame from the topic of mechanics, we offer to our ignorant orators the possibility of substituting, unlike the wretched orator of the Phaedrus, good for evil.

We all know the kind of composition course in which for weeks on end students write chronological essays (*My Summer Vacation*) and "describe a process" (*How to Develop Kodak Film*). One of my irresistible but unwonted recollections, from the days when we had just such a course, is of a paper on "describe a process" — or, 'How My Alligator Eats Frogs.' Step by reluctant step, crunch by reluctant crunch, in a state of hypnotized and hideous fascination, I followed that helpless frog down that hapless gullet. And alas, since that was a modern variety of author, of the type which spares the reader nothing, not just down the gullet, but further.

All such papers, so long as they are directed toward composition as a means, as a technique, I regard as fraudulent. And the most fraudulent of all is the so-called research paper, the curse of courses in general composition. If this paper is not on literary research, the English instructor does not know enough to mark it. If it is on literary research, it is of very little use in social science courses, and of absolutely no use in science courses. Very often it is on such a primitive level, even if it is on English literature, as to arouse in the minds of the brighter students nothing but contempt for the humanities.

The trouble with such exercises is that they make composition into a mere technique, of the "theme a week variety." "All the great arts," said Socrates, "require discussion and high speculation about the truths of nature; hence come loftiness of thought and completeness of execution." Our art is of such importance that I want to suggest, in all seriousness, that we require all college presidents, all business executives in the top ranks, all labor leaders, all cabinet officers, all television producers, and all presidential candidates, to take a stiff examination in the humanities.

And whether the mistakes in signals are of the 'Some in Chatman, England' variety, or whether they are of the class in which evil is substituted for good, let us correct them with the same ruthless glee. If we are to have dignity along with our drudgery, the grammar and content of our general composition courses must always be from the humanities. The discipline of oratory, of rhetoric, remains today what it was 2300 years ago. It is the art of enchanting not the heart, not the head, but the soul.

J. Ashmead
Haverford College

My students suffered the following bit of flippancy when it appeared on a spring final in Introduction to Literature. In addition to serving as an introduction to the test and an admonition about performance thereon, it attempted to relax the student and preserve the "enjoyment" of literature I had tried to teach. Incidentally, it reviewed a group of "hard" words (reduced from a list of one hundred) from Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*. (It could be verse.)

I. I must insist upon your (1) vehement refusal

To give your neighbor's work even the most casual (2) perusal.

That he is near — and smart — is purely (3) adventitious. His work is (4) sacrosanct and should be protected from glances, (5) surreptitious.

But surely, there's no need for (6) remonstrations.

(7) Despicable (8) expostulations like these are only demonstrations

Of the fact that I'm (9) atavistic, a representative of a generation

Which used to thrive on what is now (10) disdained, (11) vituperation.

Instead, let me present for your (12) lugubrious attention

A test, which I prefer to view merely as an extension.

Of the day when, with (13) flippancy and my characteristic (14) loquacity, I tried to bring to literature (15) exhilaration and (16) vivacity.

The time is yours. Write with (17) alacrity! Quick!

And please! Check your gaze — and mediocrity (sic).

Lawrence J. Levy
The Defiance College

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF ASEE, NCTE, MLA, CCCC, IRE, STWE

The following were present on June 15, 1959, at a meeting of the joint committee: Clifford Laity, Thomas Farrell, Warren Crater, and Stanley Cook, ASEE; Erwin Steinberg, CCCC; Joseph Mersand, NCTE; George W. Stone, MLA; and Herman Estrin, CEA.

Cook stated that this meeting was called to establish closer relations with other organizations whose interest lies in the field of English studies and teaching and to establish a joint committee to look further into the question of English for students in engineering and technical schools.

Estrin presented a tentative outline as to the purposes of such a joint committee:

I. To establish English not only as a service course of skills, but also as a course of enrichment, culture, self-satisfaction, and individual development to one's maximum.

II. To propose and suggest effective teaching methods so that the strong subject content can be more fully realized.

III. To serve as a liaison with industry.
A. To note the deficiencies of engineering graduates in reading, writing, and speaking.

B. To learn the demands of industry concerning the reading, writing, and speaking of the engineers.

C. To decide what programs of study we should adopt in view of what industry may recommend.

IV. To articulate with teachers of English in the high schools.

A. To cite the needs of students as we instructors see them.

B. To suggest readings so that students are better informed.

C. To suggest types of writings that students should undertake in high school.

4. To suggest the types of speeches which students should be making.

V. To do research in the areas of literature, speech, and composition and to disseminate these results to high school teachers of English, to industry, and to our colleagues.

VI. To establish a rapport with the college, industry, and the secondary school so that a flow of information among the three levels can be effected.

VII. To arrange for joint state, regional, and national meetings so that these purposes can be realized. For example, ASEE with STWE; NCTE with ASEE; MLA with CEA; etc.

VIII. To encompass the assistance and resources of other professional societies, for example, the following: Speech Association of America; American Institute of Electrical Engineers; American Institute of Chemical Engineers; American Society of Mechanical Engineers; Institute of Radio Engineers; American Association

for the Advancement of Science; American Studies Association.

Stone stated that from the kindergarten through college, English instructors should give their students a background so that literature will stir their imaginations and give discovery, recognition, and enjoyment of literature. Teachers, he said, must be trained to define English as an aesthetic approach, a critical evaluation, and an expression of an idea.

He discussed "The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English" as presented by members of ASA, CEA, MLA, and NCTE. He wants an involvement with various schools and colleges.

It was suggested that NCTE have closer relationships with other groups on a state, regional, and national basis. NCTE could help disseminate the Basic Issues report to gain teachers' interests in it and to gain support from administrators to try it out.

The following attended a second meeting on June 16: C. A. Brown, G. Christensen, J. Souther, T. Farrell, C. Laity, W. Smith, J. Swift, ASEE; Joseph Mersand, NCTE; Erwin Steinberg, CCCC; Herman Estrin, CEA.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Joint meetings of the interested societies: for example, at the NCTE and the CCCC convention, ASEE should hold an English Division meeting. At the ASEE convention, the CCCC or IRE may hold a joint meeting; at the CCCC convention, STWE may hold its meeting.

2. Joint publications of interesting papers. Because *The Journal of Engineering Education* has such a backlog of papers, it was suggested that the English Division of ASEE might submit papers for consideration to editors of other journals such as the *Bulletin of CCCC*, the *English Journal*, *College English*, and the *Journal of Higher Education*.

3. Exchange of the newsletters of each of these organizations.

4. A wider distribution and implementation of "B.1" to the a. Teacher; b. Department; c. School; d. Foundation.

5. Better methods of communications among the officers of NCTE, CCCC, CEA, MLA, ASEE, IRE, etc.

6. Pooling of resources, e.g., obtaining better speakers.

7. Exchange of directories of each organization.

To continue the discussion of the aims of the committee and to follow through on the suggestions made in this report, a temporary committee was appointed by Cook: Joseph Mersand, NCTE; Erwin Steinberg, CCCC; Herman Estrin, CEA; George Stone, MLA; and (to be announced), ASEE.

Herman A. Estrin

Newark College of Engineering

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Book List For A Friend Who Doesn't Read

I have a friend who'll believe anything you tell him about a book. Rather than read it. He honestly believes that he is interested in reading and that he would do more reading (some) if he had time (wanted to).

He once asked me, as a great favor, to make up a list of good books for him to read, with a comment or two on each one. Knowing he would never go to the trouble of checking up on my annotations by actually reading any of the books, I indulged myself by taking some liberties with the truth. Of course, my friend, being a non-reader, is immune to being taken in if it means reading a book. Others, however, who peruse the list which I here set down, and I hope there will be some, must proceed at their own risk.

Gone With the Wind, by Margaret Mitchell

A long-winded story in which the author takes 1037 pages to say what could have been said in one four-letter word: "Pfft!"

Of Human Badinage, by G. B. Shaw

One of the wittiest and cleverest of stories by the creator of Mr. Jeeves.

For Whom the Belle Trolls, by Izaak Walton

Title from memory and may be inaccurate. As I recall it, story of a woman with the fishing fleet who baits her hook for a sailor.

The Last Hurrah, by Edwina O'Connor

A disillusioned cheerleader, fed up on juvenile delinquency among grade school athletes, dumps her messy story on the D. A. In relief over making a clean breast of it all, she subtitles her story, "Goodbye, Tristesse."

The Age of Innocence, by Edith Wharton

Term used here in the now obsolete sense of a time of life instead of with the modern sense of a nonexistent period of history.

Looking Backward, by Edward Bellamy

A look backward on the progress of the future as it may appear if we propel ourselves far enough forward so the future is in the past before it has had a chance to happen.

Strange Innertube, by Eugene O'Neill

Subtitled "Great Hoax from Little Akrons Grow." No hoax at all really, but the thrilling story of the tubeless tire and its effect on a rich Midwestern family. (Confidentially, it makes them richer.)

Remembrance of Things Past, by Marcel Proust

If you wonder what remembrance could deal with other than things past. Mark Twain, you know, said that as he grew older he remembered more and more things that weren't so.

The Buck in the Snow, by Dame Runyon

A tale of cold cash—necessarily short since a dollar doesn't go very far any more.

Giants in the Earth, by Redefer Smith

How Dem Bums ground the Giants into the dirt in a famous pennant race. Not an addition to belles lettres.

Light in August, by William Faulkner

A thin tale centering about the annual problem of an average professor and his billfold.

Berlin Diary, by William L. Shirer

Thinly disguised pseudonymous autobiography of America's greatest popular twentieth century composer. Tells how he composed "Moonlight on the Ganges" on the banks of the East River, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" on a bench in Union Square, and married the daughter of a western Union messenger boy to the strains of "A Bicycle Built for Two."

The Call of the Wild, by Jack London

Usually represented nowadays by a wolf whistle.

Autobiography of David Crockett

A synthetic work largely from the resourceful pens of Kit Marlowe, the Earl of Oxford, Francis Bacon and W. Disney, with some help from Estes Kefauver.

The Bridge of San Luis Rey by Thornton Wilder

San Luis Rey, though little known to the twentieth century, was actually the forerunner of Work, Jacoby, Culbertson and Goren. A study of this early pass master by a great scholar.

John Brown's Body, by Stephen Vincent Spillane

Famous murder story, though my shaky memory tells me to suspect the title. Might be John Brown's Blonde's Body.

The Brothers Karamazov, by Fyodor Chayevsky

An obscure novel that may yet achieve wide acclaim if Marilyn Monroe ever succeeds in appearing in a screen version.

From Ear to Eternity

Encyclopedia Britannica Juvenilia, Vol. V

Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott

A companion piece of Gulliver's Travels published by Swift under a pseudonym nearly 150 years after his famous story of the Lilliputians.

The Leatherstocking Tales, edited by J. Fenimore Cooper

A small collection of the many tales of men who went off their financial rocker over the mortality rate of their wives' nylons. Includes a remedy.

It is a good many months ago since I gave my friend the list. He has twice complimented me on it and has mentioned at least a half dozen times his intention of reading every book on it starting with the first and going through every one in the order listed. It is just possible that you may know the man I refer to. If you do and want to be kind to him, don't tell him about this little piece. He might be tempted actually to read one of the books and, who knows, he might never survive the personality change. After all, his wife probably married him because she loved him the way he was.

Louis Hasley
Notre Dame

HUMANITIES SEMINAR

(Continued from p. 1)

and yet told of his saddening discovery that the brightest and most talented of our young people, as he had discovered from his work with medical students at Johns Hopkins, are lonely and unhappy.

With no malice, but with abiding affection and sympathy, Dr. Loa expressed his conviction that we are surfeited by a wealth of specialization that has taken us away from the meaningful basis of life and thus has robbed us of a reason for being. He suggested that in addition to bringing Indonesians to this country to study and to learn, we should send a substantial number of young Americans to Indonesia to teach them that material values alone do not make happiness. This suggestion that cultural exchange must be a two-way affair was one of the key ideas of the entire seminar.

The Question of Values

Into the early hours of the morning, after the banquet, some forty of the indefatigable Seminararians concentrated on a free-for-all analysis of a UNESCO pamphlet prepared by Ralph Henry Gabriel, entitled "Traditional Values in American Life," to be used as the working paper in a round-table discussion between India and the USA. This booklet presents a succinct analysis of such topics as "American Values in Politics," "Law in American Values," "Religion in American Values," etc. While recognizing its great value for the purpose intended, some members of the group criticized it for the little it says about the shortcomings in the operation of our values: the picture is too neat and tidy.

Everyone Has His Say

The second day of the seminar was devoted largely to five discussion groups in which everyone had a chance to contribute.

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The problems and values of cultural exchange were canvassed; many felt that the greatest rewards for international understanding could be achieved in this field by focussing on individual people and specific issues, staying away so far as possible from politics.

In one discussion group Charles Merrifield, Associate Director, Joint Council on Economic Education, pointed out that no study has ever been made of the results of cultural exchanges: if it were, it would stagger the imagination. But John Shirley, Dean of the Faculty, North Carolina State College, wondered whether the interchange is proceeding fast enough to meet the present emergency. Time is pressing. We must mobilize all our resource to avert disaster. The question was raised whether history provides any evidence that cultural interchange prevents war, and the only answer given was that this is a matter of faith. We must simply assume that mutual understanding will prevent strife.

Whether the USA knows how to export a way of life rather than merely a standard of living was warmly debated. Equally warmly discussed was the question what image of ourselves we should seek to export — are we satisfied with the actual image, or do we want to create an ideal image for foreign consumption? The harm done by the shoddy or false picture of us conveyed by our movies and by American tourists was emphasized.

Since culture changes daily, it was suggested that all we can actually export is a point on a moving line. Also it is counter to the American spirit to try to force ideas upon others — perhaps our chief export should be the image of man as the initiator of his own destiny. W. Gordon Whaley, Dean of the Graduate School, The University of Texas, again raised the question

of time: can we solve the problem of a fair image of America abroad before science has pushed so far ahead that it destroys mankind? Israel Light, Public Relations-Information Officer, U. S. Public Health Service, urged nevertheless that we not push too hard: the thing we must learn to say to others is, "We know we aren't perfect, but we are trying to make progress."

On the question as to whether an image of man can be created which will be meaningful for all men, opinions differed. Some felt this to be quite impossible. Others pointed out that it has been the aim of all profound philosophies. Until we know what we are as Americans, a few questioned, how can we discuss a universal image? Americans are a process rather than an image, it was suggested.

How To Do It?

Two urgent reasons why an effective image of man must be created, it was felt, are to avoid war and to dispel misunderstanding. The image is needed not to convert others to our way of thinking but to "establish a circuit and communicate." We must at all costs avoid the flavor of cultural imperialism. But "the tragic irony of the present moment is that the self-interest of preservation coincides with the idealistic desire for cultural development."

In the discussions, some felt that the concept of an intercultural year to promote international understanding is a patent absurdity. Cooperative ventures like the geophysical year work only when there is an established base for operation — a specific problem, and specific well-understood tools for dealing with it. Nevertheless, hope for success was expressed if a very specific cultural problem could be worked on which would not run into political or religious convictions.

A Pattern of Success

As a pattern for us to consider, Murray D. Lincoln, Chairman of the board of CARE, in a luncheon address, presented his philosophy of international understanding which has worked so well in the operation of CARE. The beginning point is "the other fellow": we must know more about him and our only aim must be to give him help to grow to his full stature in his own way. The nations of the world should get together and agree on this as their common objective. Mr. Lincoln described the success he has met with in his own endeavors by following this policy of always asking what the person he tries to serve needs. We must concern ourselves with people first and with things second. He expressed a profoundly democratic belief in the ability of the common man to make the right decisions if he is allowed to decide. He felt that our country has reached a kind of stalemate at present. In politics and economics, he said, we have not produced a single new idea since the first Truman administration. We must set out not to make money but to meet human needs.

Theory Unlimited

A puzzling diversion into theory unlimi-

ted came when Edward F. Haskell, Chairman, Council for Unified Research and Education, and Giorgio Tagliacozzo, Editor, Radio University, Voice of America, presented highly speculative suggestions for the solution of man's problems. Mr. Haskell's took the form of an elaborate mathematical theory of the rhythmic pattern of human events, and Giorgio Tagliacozzo's the form of a vast schematization of all knowledge, into which new ideas and proposals can be placed to give them perspective. On a more concrete level, Sumner C. Powell of the Choate School described the effective student exchange and work program carried out by his school.

The Unpopular American

Francis J. Colligan, of the State Department's Bureau of International Cultural Relations, speaking at Tuesday's dinner session, discussed the persistent image of the unpopular American abroad. Steps being taken to counter this include a booklet of suggestions prepared for passport holders, orientation programs for government personnel abroad, and many area studies. He called for an analysis of cross-cultural images of value, for more cultural empathy, and a breakdown of our psychological inhibitions against cross-cultural discoveries in such fields as religion and political ideology. We must master the art of imaginative projection of ourselves into the cultures of others.

Nevertheless, he warned that we should not, in this process, lose our pride in what we are: we must keep our integrity, but learn the lesson of mutual respect. In these fields the humanities play a key role. The word understanding is replacing the word benevolence in our world, and who but the humanist can humanize the understanding?

The Machine Age

A second late-evening, optional session of this hard-working conference explored the possibilities of the use of TV and recorders in humanities teaching and in language training. The audience was much impressed by a filmed lecture-demonstration of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex shown by Floyd Rinker, Director, Council for a Television Course in the Humanities. The film was prepared as one of a series for use in high school humanities courses. These films, he stated, can help provide a meaningful basis for classroom discussion. Harry J. Skornia, Executive Director of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters and Donald J. Lloyd, Associate Director of the Humanities Center and Director of an Audio-Visual Research Project at Wayne State University for the teaching of French, led the discussion that followed.

A Geocultural Year?

On a concluding panel Wednesday morning concerning a proposed "geocultural year," Harlow Shapley, Harvard University, urged us to strike while the iron was hot. He called the recently concluded geophysical year "the most important peace effort since the renaissance," and urged that its achievement in international co-

(Please turn to p. 10)

READING FOR ENJOYMENT

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both of Kansas State College

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(Continued from p. 10)

operation be carried forward, though disavowing the concept of a geocultural year. As a fitting topic for a new project he proposed an international study of human ecology.

Charles M. Powell, President, American Agricultural Chemical Company, pointed out that the effectiveness of the geophysical year stemmed from the precision of science: in cultural areas there is an immense problem of how to transmit non-scientific ideas across cultural boundaries. He felt that a continuing cultural exchange should be set up, and urged the stepping up of activities already begun, such as the exchange of students among nations.

J. Russell Bright, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts, Wayne State University, called for the inclusion of biology and the behavioral sciences in the exchanges and for the full utilization of already established agencies such as UNESCO. He felt too that more "little fellows" from labor and women's organizations should become involved.

Bowen C. Dees, Deputy Assistant Director for Scientific Personnel and Education, National Science Foundation, raised some questions: Is there an American culture? Can an effective image of man be shaped? Does better understanding lead to international friendship? We need, he felt, to discuss modes of attack on these questions. We should bring the scholarship we already have in this country to bear on these topics in more meetings like the present. After that we could spread our wings and fly abroad. He expressed grave doubt that a real cultural exchange can be set up on an international level at the present time. He also expressed the hope that in the future we could do something much more basic than the interchange of persons and artifacts. He called for a series of successive steps in exploring "pieces of culture" to discover what is possible in this field.

Harry J. Skornia, Executive Director, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, suggested that we should begin with an "understand other peoples year" for our own citizens. Other nations are doing better in this respect than we are. Humanists must keep out of propaganda and not become an "implement of the cold war." We must also keep out of the hands of advertising agencies.

Robert P. Holston, Communications Consultant, urged that we transfer the managerial knowledge gained in the geophysical year to a program in the humanities. Harlow Shapley pointed out that the IGY was fathered by the academies of science; perhaps other academies such as the American Philosophical Society might start a project in the humanities. Striking a courageous note, John Ball, Associate Director of the Humanities Center, said "We are not ready to take positive action. We all know we don't know enough. But every worthwhile effort is accomplished by people who

aren't ready."

Derek J. Price, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, then called upon us to set our own scholarly house within the humanities in order before we seek to branch out. But George Watkins, Vice President, Container Corporation of America, urged an immediate concentrated effort to carry our ideas outwards to others. James T. Nicholson, former Executive Vice President, American Red Cross, referred to the growing cooperation among nations in international charity as an example of what can be done and said that the real need in a world in which one half of the children have no school facilities at all is for more effort to enable all men to become whole men. Philip Conley, Chief Cultural Planning Officer, US Information Agency, declared that we should stimulate progress in the arts, learn more about cooperation, and increase the general appreciation of the fruits of culture. He called for an international search for common values. Mr. Dees added that the seminar was performing a real service in providing an opportunity for debating the issues of cultural exchange, and Neil B. Reynolds of the General Electric Company concretely suggested that we should explore the areas in which cultural barriers exist and determine where intercultural exchange could most fruitfully take place. He suggested the use of sabbatical years of college teachers for exchange programs. Finally, moderator Francis Horn, President of the University of Rhode Island, summed up by stressing that the problem is urgent, that time is running out.

The Role of the Politician

Douglas Hurd of the United Kingdom Mission to the UN gave the final major address of the Seminar. He deprecated the neglect of the UN in the discussions, and the tendency of the seminarians to feel that

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— Professor Edward K. Williams
DePauw University

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political differences "can be swept under the rug." He referred to two opposing views of history: one, that the common man is peaceful and friendly and that politicians and leaders cause wars; the other, that it takes all the skill of the politicians and leaders around the world to prevent the common men from fighting each other. The diplomat's task in the modern world, he said, is to alleviate the explosive situations that exist. We must not pretend that they are not there. Cultural interchange can be of value only when it occurs in full awareness of political differences.

Mr. Hurd likened the world of nations to a war-time conveyer. The diplomatic ship in the convoy may be the slowest in the group, but if the others sail on without it they may all be destroyed.

This wide-ranging Seminar concluded with a summary address delivered by Joseph W. Angell, Jr., Assistant Chief, USAF Historical Division, which pulled together the major topics that had been discussed and expressed his belief that the work of the seminar had just begun.

The proceedings of the conference were taped and will be made available in taped and printed form.

L. E. H.

Freshman English at Amherst (Continued from p. 1)

writer. He is asked what he saw, or felt, or did during the particular moment that the assignment directs him to — perhaps a moment when he paid attention to something, when he asked a question, when he learned something, when he found himself speechless. For example, an early assignment this year began with this question:

"Being asked to shift your attention or being told to pay attention can be a pleasant or annoying experience. The child with a new bike shouts at a playmate 'Look!' the person beside the driver shouts 'Look out!', a friend says 'Look at the present I have for you', or someone says 'Now look what you've done!' For this assignment select an occasion when you were asked to pay attention, or when you shifted your attention, or when you started attending more closely. Then: Describe how you felt, what happened inside you, what pleasure or pain this moment gave you."

If the student sees the experience he writes about as part of his own private, unarticulated life, he will be unable to find ready-made language to fit it, and he will have to devise his own. From time to time, the language he is forced to find may, by his own choice, take the form of a lyric poem or a short story. And in many cases, the better papers written by a class will take forms that can be judged by fairly sophisticated literary standards.

But in early assignments, the student often discovers, with surprise, that he has very little indeed to say about such experiences. As a second step in a typical assignment, then, or perhaps in a subsequent assignment, he is asked to step back and

consider what he did when he tried to write about the problem he was assigned — how, by devising his own language, he tried to determine his position as a writer. Thus the second part of the assignment I just quoted continues:

"How much of what you felt can you describe? Yet you can say a good deal about what happened to the setting. How do you explain this?"

This assignment as a whole, then, has asked the student to describe a moment of his experience, and to account for the way in which he as a writer dealt with it.

In class, looking at the mimeographed papers written by his classmates in answer to the same assignment, the student is also asked to become a literary critic, to see what sentences are more successful than others, what papers are more interesting than others.

Then, after class discussion, the student is given the problem again, rephrased, so that he can attempt to apply whatever he has learned about writing to another aspect of the same situation. An assignment following the one I just described, and in this case closing a two-week sequence in which the student explored the subject of "paying attention," read as follows:

"Consider once again what happens when you pay attention, or shift your attention, or attend more closely. In the next forty-eight hours be on the lookout for an occasion. When it comes, become conscious of it and try to describe it to yourself as it happens. Try once more to write a paper in which you express what happened when you paid attention, or shifted your attention, or became more attentive. Before you write this paper, look over your previous papers and the material discussed in the classroom, and recall what has been said in class. This paper should express what-

ever clarity you have come to about the act of expressing what happens when you pay attention."

Often the changes occurring in a student's writing between assignments are dramatic, and the constant effort, the repeated opportunity to try again in a new way, seems to sustain his interest — sustain it, at any rate, if the intervening class has opened a new opportunity to him.

What is important in the Amherst composition course is what happens to the student's own writing, and to his awareness of what he does as he writes. In various ways, the student comes to realize that the world that appears in his writing is one he has made with his own words; that these words are at best representations — not imitations — of what he "really" saw, felt, did; and that his final success as a writer may depend on his ability to see the distinction between what he felt and what metaphor he has chosen to represent it. After a year spent struggling with the most challenging problems any writer can face, he emerges, ideally, with a new respect gained at first hand for the seriousness of any writer's task; with a sympathetic and sincere admiration for what the great writers have been able to make; and often with a new sense of his own identity. After trying many metaphors, many positions, many voices, he often gains a new awareness of where he is in the world he is making from his writing in all his courses, in his general education. R. P. Blackmur's description of the poet's task applies as well to the college writer: "... the chaos of private experience cannot be known or understood until it is projected and ordered in a form external to the consciousness that entertained it in flux." Our students last year came to a similar conclusion, having reached it in their own way, by their

own writing.

For example, one boy, having written 21 assignments by that time, tried to deal with a situation demanding enough for the most accomplished writer, and nearly impossible, it would seem, for a 17-year-old. In the assignment he is answering, I think the reader can see the rather complex language developed over the course of a semester in order to bring the student to see what a private experience is; and in the response to that assignment, I think the reader can see how the student achieves a position of his own by discovering what language can, and cannot, do. The assignment was:

"It has been said that although students have exciting perceptions while in college, these take place outside the system of their thinking, with the consequence that the attitudes that they began by defending remain unchanged. Write out an example of a recent, exciting illumination of yours that took place outside the system of your thinking. What is a system? What do you take the preposition "outside" in "outside the system" to mean?" And one student's reply, just as he submitted it, was:

"I had felt that nothing was permanent; everything in this world was changing with its own particular rate. Each thing I encountered seemed a face in the New York rush hour crowds. I hurried to 42nd street and everybody and everything streamed by me, each one with its own destination. Even the steel-grey beams were changing, as with time's passage they became more infirm under their burden, and aged, and rusted. The trains, not caring for their human cargo, sped through this bizarre, yellow, tawdry, dim-lighted world of pits and tunnels.

"I was strangely aware of this activity, occasionally studied it by trying to assume the identity and rate of flow of one of these bodies hurtling through time and space. I succeeded occasionally. It seemed to me that the natural state of things was motion — life, people, planets, plants, speeding moving, changing — myself alike. I saw no end to this motion. It was constant. There almost seemed planning in the complete unstableness of things.

"Then suddenly a friend of mine was killed in an automobile accident. "Where," I thought, "where does this, death, fit into this fantastic scheme of universal flux?" I have, since that time, thought much about this. I do not understand this "death" thing. Has it taken Stue's place? I say "Stue is dead," rather than "Stue is Stue." Is death changing in his place, for him? Is it the only unmoving thing in life? Is it a part of life at all? I cannot comprehend death. I cannot even feel what death is. It is one step above my present vocabulary, and it is even beyond my powers of intuition.

"If I could measure death in centimeters, I at least would know the number of centimeters which could "hide" that thing which is death, although, surely, death

(Please turn to p. 12)

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN? HOW IS IT PRONOUNCED? WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

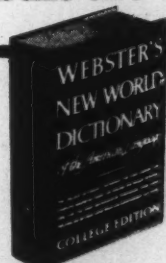
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(Continued from p. 11)

does not contain these standards, until I, in an abortive attempt at understanding, say that it does. However, this would be some sort of way in which I could talk about death. But, no such standard exists for me. I cannot "measure" this death with any scale I know. I possess no "ready made concept" that could be thrown completely about this unknown, so as to allow me even to feign understanding. Death has no meaning for me, except that Stueie has somehow become this thing."

The claims I have made for the Amherst course, and the goals it sets, may seem extravagant. I don't feel they are. The course represents an agreement that all teachers can reach about writing: that it is serious, difficult, important. The teachers of English 1-2 at Amherst would agree with Dr. Johnson when he said that "Composition is, for the most part, an effort of slow diligence and steady perseverance, to which the mind is dragged by necessity or resolution, and from which the attention is every moment starting to more delightful amusements." And many of our students do find that diligence, finally, is more exciting than amusement.

William W. Heath
Amherst College

Michigan CEA Spring Meeting April 18

Ninety-one members of MCEA, including 13 men registrants, were guests of Flint Junior College and Flint College of the University of Michigan. After coffee and doughnuts, members attended their choice of three sessions, on Honors Programs, Modern Poetry, or the WMU Humanities Program.

At the pre-luncheon business session, chaired by MCEA President Keith Fennimore (Albion), Verne Wagner (WSU) reported for the certification committee:

(1) At the present stage of state planning, requirements for a teaching minor are still weak. If a tentative code is published before MCEA's fall meeting, time may be needed for discussion by the group then.

(2) Wagner and A. K. Stevens (UM) are helping plan a proposed conference for next December or January in Lansing, to parallel last year's Bowling Green conference of TEPS (Teacher Education Professional Standards). MCEA will help finance this.

(3) In the "national tableau," NCTE is seeking cooperation from other subject-matter organizations in an attempt to gain equality of representation by subject-matter specialists on NCATE, now predominantly educationist and administrative.

Wagner proposed endorsement by MCEA of the following NCTE resolution: Be it resolved that the MCEA is strongly opposed to any certification or accreditation standards established by the North Central Accreditation Association which does not require twenty-four semester hours in English as the minimum preparation for teachers of English in accredited high

schools; that these hours be in addition to the course in English methods, and exclusive of freshman composition; and that the courses taken represent a meaningful pattern, including advanced composition and the scientific study of language, as well as English and American literature.

The resolution was passed unanimously, and is being forwarded to the North Central Association.

(4) Regional accreditation may not be the answer to the problem either, as it also is dominated by professional administrators and educationists.

In the afternoon Frederick Kroeger (FJC) chairman of the Junior College Certification committee John Matle (HFCC) and W. Bede Mitchell (Kellogg College—Battle Creek) reported, presenting three alternate proposals for MCEA's consideration. In the discussion that followed, the consensus was that the main concern is to remove Junior colleges from consideration along with high schools and align them with higher education, four-year college and university personnel practice. There is objection to the term "certification," since it always implies education courses.

The following resolution was passed by the group: The Michigan College English Association presents the following resolution to the State Sub-committee on Teacher Certification Code Revision: Resolved that: Community colleges should employ teaching personnel on the same basis of competency as is the practice in the four-year colleges and universities in the state;

And, in general, a junior or community college instructor in Michigan, to be professionally qualified and certified, should have fulfilled the following requirements: A minimum of a master's degree in the subject field he will teach, with these qualifications:

A. In the fine arts there should be a secondary emphasis on related fields of interest. The emphasis should be on information, ideas, and production in the field rather than on such knowledge as can be gained in courses in education.

B. Instructors employed in the vocational-technical fields should present a minimum of a college or professional degree.

William Harris (HPJC), chairman, reported on results of a survey by the Junior College Committee. Of the 48 institutions questioned, 33 responded (22 4-year, 11 2-year) to provide a meaningful cross-section of teaching loads, class sizes, and other factors in Michigan's college English teaching.

Statistically, it is evident that Junior College English teachers in the state carry a heavy composition load in comparison to teachers at four-year institutions. Concerned about publicizing the implications of the report among people who can and should do something about this inequality, MCEA enthusiastically endorsed a follow-up statement by Eugene Grewe (UD): A copy of the JC Committee's report will be sent to all persons (Deans, Superintendents

of Schools, Chairmen of English Departments, etc.) who have any connection with teaching of English in junior colleges in Michigan, accompanied by a letter (written by Grewe and modified by MCEA discussion) which carefully points up the more serious implications therein.

The following MCEA officers were elected for 1959-60 by unanimous ballot: President, Keith Fennimore (Albion); Vice-President, John Hepler (CMC); Secy-Treas., Ivan Schreiber (EMC).

Margaret A. Dempster
Henry Ford Community College

CEA PRESIDENT SPEAKS

John Ciardi, president of the College English Association, was a speaker at the four-day Southwest Writers Conference in Corpus Christi in June and college English teachers of the area seized the chance to have him as their special guest on one occasion.

He spoke at a lunch arranged by the English faculty of Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, attended also by English teachers from Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville, and others.

Ciardi spoke informally, the springboard for his comments being written questions handed to him as he talked. The questions

Kay McCracken
Del Mar College

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